

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

PAYING TRIBUTE TO DUANE GERREN

HON. SCOTT McINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 3, 2004

Mr. McINNIS. Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege to rise today to pay tribute to Duane Gerren and thank him for his outstanding commitment to serving the people of Colorado as a Dolores County Commissioner. As he celebrates his retirement, let it be known that he leaves behind a wonderful and strong legacy of dedication to the citizens of Dolores County and the State of Colorado.

For the past four years, Duane has served Dolores County as a county commissioner. He also serves on the Dolores County Senior Advisory Board where he represented Dolores County to the 2002 Philanthropy Days for the Southwest. This enabled the Dolores County Senior Services to receive grants to help sustain the senior program. Duane's extensive civic involvement also includes serving on the Canyon of the Ancients Advisory Board, San Juan Basin Area Agency on Aging, and Housing Solutions for the Southwest.

Mr. Speaker, it is clear that County Commissioner Duane Gerren has ceaselessly dedicated his time and efforts to serving his county and the people of Colorado as a County Commissioner for Dolores County. I am honored to bring his hard work and commitment to the attention of this body of Congress and this nation today. Thank you for all your service Duane, and I wish you all the best in your future endeavors.

FALLEN HEROES

SPEECH OF

HON. CHARLES F. BASS

OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 20, 2004

Mr. BASS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Sergeant William John Tracy, Jr. of Webster, New Hampshire. He bravely served the Army's Company B, 5-158th Aviation, supporting Operation Enduring Freedom. Sgt. Tracy made the ultimate sacrifice to protect his country and aid the Afghani people when his Blackhawk helicopter tragically crashed in Kuwait on February 25, 2003.

I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Sergeant William John Tracy, Jr. and our other service men and women who have courageously given their own lives in order to protect and defend the democracy we enjoy in America and to extend the freedoms that come with democracy to those who live in fear and oppression worldwide.

INTRODUCTION OF THE VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION FOR THE FUTURE ACT

HON. MICHAEL N. CASTLE

OF DELAWARE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 3, 2004

Mr. CASTLE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this bill, which I am offering to ensure the continued success of vocational and technical education programs into the future. The bill, the Vocational and Technical Education for the Future Act, includes a number of positive reforms that will help strengthen vocational and technical education programs and improve opportunities for students.

Vocational and technical education, authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act and known as the Perkins program, aims to prepare youth and adults for the future by building their academic and technical skills and ensuring they are equipped to proceed with postsecondary education or pursue other avenues. This program represents one of the largest federal investments in our Nation's high schools and is a key component of our secondary and postsecondary education systems.

According to the National Center for Education Statistics, 66 percent of all public secondary schools have one or more vocational and technical education programs with approximately 96 percent of high school students taking at least one vocational and technical course during their secondary studies. Vocational and technical education is an important postsecondary option as well. Over 2,600 postsecondary sub-baccalaureate institutions, such as community colleges, technical institutes, skill centers, and other public and private colleges, also offer vocational and technical education.

Reforms made to the Perkins Act in 1998 increased the focus on ensuring that participating students at both the secondary and postsecondary levels acquired academic and technical skills, as well as completed their respective programs and transitioned into successful employment or further education. Some progress has been made as states have created an initial performance accountability system and the focus on academic performance among students participating in vocational and technical education courses has been strengthened.

Today, I am offering the Vocational and Technical Education for the Future Act to build on the 1998 reforms, and ensure vocational and technical education continues to prepare students for whatever they choose to pursue upon graduation. Should a student choose to proceed with postsecondary education, enter the military, or pursue other opportunities, the goal of the Perkins program must be to prepare students with the right combination of academic and technical skills so that they may succeed in whatever path they choose.

The bill I am offering includes a number of reforms designed to enhance achievement

and accountability, streamline programs so that states may better utilize federal dollars, and provide a model sequence of courses that will enhance vocational and technical education programs and partnerships.

The bill include important steps to increase accountability, and emphasizes continued improvement in student achievement. The bill establishes separate performance indicators for secondary and postsecondary students, improving on current law by recognizing the need for distinct measures to be applied to differing students. The bill also requires states to make continued and substantial improvement in the academic and vocational and technical achievement of students, and establishes incentive grants for states exceeding their own high standards.

To increase accountability and achievement at the local level, the bill requires local programs to establish local adjusted levels of performance similar to current statewide performance level expectations. The Vocational and Technical Education for the Future Act also establishes local improvement plans and permits states to apply sanctions for local recipients that, after receiving technical assistance, fail to show improvement or continually do not meet local adjusted levels of performance.

To better streamline and target federal funding, the bill combines funding for the TechPrep and Perkins state grant programs into one program funding stream, and incorporates the activities of Tech-Prep into the basic grant program. This consolidation will increase flexibility for states, streamline funding, and ensure current activities continue to exist while the program as a whole is updated to meet the challenges of the future.

The Vocational and Technical Education for the Future Act includes an important new element that will build upon efforts to coordinate secondary and postsecondary vocational and technical education. The bill requires states to develop model sequences of courses for vocational and technical programs to be used as an option at the local level. These model sequences of courses will incorporate both secondary and postsecondary elements, include rigorous and challenging academic and vocational and technical content in a coordinated, nonduplicative progression of courses, and lead to a degree or credential.

Technology and economic competition are combining in ways that are changing the nature of work and are redefining the American workplace. The need for higher literacy, numeracy, communication, and interpersonal skills in the workplace has grown over the past decade and will continue to be an important factor in the workplace in the future. The skills needed to be successful in postsecondary education are similar to the skills that are required by employers. The need for a strong academic and technical background makes it imperative that the current vocational and technical education system adapt in order to provide the knowledge and skills needed to succeed.

The bill I am offering today seeks to meet the challenges of a changing economy and

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